

CMS Federal Vaccine Mandate



Background

On Nov. 5, 2021, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services [released](#) the [interim final rule](#) with a comment period requiring COVID-19 vaccination of eligible staff at health care facilities participating in Medicare and Medicaid programs. The requirement applies to approximately 76,000 providers and covers more than 17 million health care workers across the country. The requirement impacts Medicare entities regulated by CMS (such as hospitals, hospices, rural health clinics, etc.). All eligible staff are required to have their first dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine or a one-dose vaccine by Dec. 5, 2021, before providing any care, treatment or other services. Full vaccination, without an approved exemption, is required for all eligible staff by Jan. 4, 2022.

Sample External Talking Points - use the ones that work for your hospital.

- We are always committed to providing quality and safe care for our patients.
- The health and safety of our associates, patients and the community remains our top priority.
- The majority of employees at our hospital have been vaccinated; all remaining eligible staff, without an approved exemption, will have their first dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine or a one-dose vaccine by Dec. 5, 2021.
- We are putting plans and policies in place to meet the federal requirements.
- We are working with our staff who have not yet been vaccinated to receive their first dose by Dec. 5, 2021, or complete the needed paperwork if they are eligible for a medical or religious exemption.
- There is a small percentage of our staff who will not be vaccinated due to medical issues or religious reasons. We will have policies and processes in place for those situations as we work to provide quality care in a safe environment. .
- This vaccine requirement is similar to other requirements of employment including flu vaccinations and being up-to-date on MMR and tetanus inoculation, all of which help promote patient and staff safety.
- As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, vaccines represent an effective tool to help prevent serious infection, hospitalization and death.
- A majority of our physicians and employees had already chosen to receive the vaccine, before the federal mandate.
- Vaccines are a vital tool in protecting our employees, providers, patients and our community.
- Although no vaccine prevents all infections, the COVID-19 vaccines remain an effective way of reducing the incidence and severity of the virus.

- We believe vaccination is the effective way to reduce the incidence and severity of COVID-19. Doing so is in the safety interest of our employees, patients and families.
- We continue to strongly encourage everyone in our community to get vaccinated.
- We support efforts to educate our community on the safety and importance of vaccinations.
- Our community looks to us as a role model. They expect us to advocate for and promote health. The best way to promote patient safety in our community is for all eligible people to be vaccinated.
- Everyone in our community plays a critical role in keeping us safe from this virus. We can protect ourselves and each other right now by getting vaccinated and encouraging our friends and family to get vaccinated.

Hospitals might consider organizing your messages by identified goals ... such as:

Goals and Key Messages

- Increase awareness of the requirement's benefits to patients.
 - The health and safety of our staff, our patients and our community will always be number one.
 - The majority of employees at our hospital have been vaccinated; all remaining eligible staff, without an approved exemption, will have their first dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine or a one-dose vaccine by Dec. 5, 2021.
- Align the requirement with the current situation in the community.
 - COVID-19 can be difficult to control because people can carry and transmit the disease without showing symptoms.
 - We need a healthy and present workforce; vaccinations help keep our staff working. Vaccinations also are important for surrounding hospitals, so if we need to transfer a patient they have a staffed bed to take that patient.
 - The majority of COVID-19 infections we are seeing are primarily unvaccinated people.
- Reinforce the importance, safety and availability of COVID-19 vaccines.
 - We are confident in the science and process behind vaccine development, effectiveness, and most importantly, safety.

